



# PATUXENT RIVER COMMISSION

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☀ Please call Daniel Rosen at MDP 410-767-4577 if you have any questions or comments.

**Larry Hogan, Governor**  
**Councilman Michael Leszcz, Chairman**  
**Councilwoman Mary Kay Sigaty Vice Chairman**

*We, the Patuxent River Commission, envision a Patuxent River ecosystem as vital and productive in 2050 as it was in the 1950s. We therefore commit to be stewards and advocates for the Patuxent River and to lead and inspire actions to protect, enhance, and restore living resources and the natural, cultural, economic, and recreational values of the Patuxent River and its watershed.*

## MEETING SUMMARY

**July 12, 2017**

**Maryland Department of Agriculture**

**Annapolis, MD**

**4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.**

**Members:** Mary Kay Sigaty, Alison Armocida, David Brownlee, Martin Chandler, Guy Curley, Jeanine Nutter (for Steve Darcey), Andrew Der, Luis Dieguez, Jason Dubow, Jack Fringer, Jim George, Erica Hahn, Scott Knoche, Mark Mendelsohn, Erik Michelsen, Byron Petrauskas, Michael Snyder, Sandy Spencer, Mark Symborski, Al Tucker, Fred Tutman, Lisa White

**MDP Staff:** Jason Dubow, Deborah Herr Cornwell, and Daniel Rosen

**Visitors:** Thomas Baden

Vice Chair Mary Kay Sigaty opened the meeting in the absence of Chairman Michael Leszcz.

### Introductions

New member Lisa White was welcomed to the Commission.

### Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the May 10, 2017 meeting were adopted unanimously with one correction.

### Update—October field trip to see bioretention stormwater management projects in Columbia, MD

On October 11 from 4 pm to 6 pm, John McCoy will host a tour of bioretention projects in Columbia. Details on logistics will be provided. Members were asked to add the date to their calendars.

### Update - Bernie Fowler June 10, 2017, Wade-in

The 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Wade-in held on June 10 was well attended and Bernie saw his white sneakers up to a depth of 41.5". In the July 2017 Spinsheet magazine, Steve Allan, MDP provided a writeup of his experience at the Wade-in.

### Update – Non-binding letter of support for USACE appropriation request

The Commission was provided a copy of the June 8, 2017 letter of support from Secretary Wendi Peters to the USACE. Jason Dubow provided the background on the potential project; the USACE is requesting appropriations to conduct an aquatic ecosystem restoration watershed assessment to identify ecosystem restoration opportunities within the Patuxent River watershed. Erik Michelsen suggested the project should include drawing from the plans already developed in the watershed.

**Update – DNR Shellfish – oysters and blue crabs**

Alison Armocida noted that the commercial blue crab harvest season has been shortened, the season will end on November 20 due to a drop in population in the annual survey. Results from the 2016 oyster survey were provided to the Oyster Advisory Committee. Initial findings indicated that the population is low, there was a decrease in biomass and an increase in mortality. Assessment of the survey is in process and will be provided when the report is released. No openings of the sanctuaries are scheduled at this time.

**Update – Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund awardees within the Patuxent watershed**

A list of grants awarded to projects in the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bay was provided. Jason Dubow noted that the Cattail Creek Restoration project, located at the headwaters of the Patuxent, had been awarded. Alison Armocida reported that these grants were for implementation and the next application cycle would open in January 2018.

**Annual Election – Chair and Vice-Chair**

Jason Dubow reviewed the election process, noting that designees are not allowed to vote. A determination was made by Vice Chair Sigaty that representatives of ex-officio members can vote.

Two nominees were put forward for the office of Chair: Michael Leszcz and Fred Tutman. Written votes were cast resulting in a tie; 8 votes each for both Michael and Fred and one write in candidate. After further discussion, it was noted that one of the ex-officio members had not voted and the Commission decided to revote. The result of the 2<sup>nd</sup> vote was also a tie. The Commission discussed the option to have co-Chairs since two votes had resulted in a tie. By unanimous vote, the Commission decided that Michal Leszcz and Fred Tutman would serve as co-chairs for the next year.

Vice Chair Sigaty stated that she was not placing her name in nomination for Vice-Chair and submitted Chris Perry's nomination for Vice-Chair. The Commission voted unanimously to elect Chris Perry as Vice-Chair.

Vice Chair Sigaty reminded the Commission that members were asked to participate on a steering committee to assist the executive team in developing agendas and projects.

Fred Tutman recognized and thanked Vice Chair Sigaty for her leadership on the Commission.

**Tourism workgroup update – disclaimer language for Patuxent River Challenge**

Tom Baden presented an overview of the "Patuxent River Challenge" explaining that participants will take a picture documenting the activities, post the pictures on Instagram with hashtag# and submit for prizes. The prizes will be donated by the participating agencies and could include free canoe rental, magnet, tote bag, etc. Signs will be installed at the location of the activity and a webpage will be created. Fourteen sites and seven agencies are onboard to participate, with a soft launch planned for January 2018.

Jason Dubow provided disclaimer language that will be used on all publications, signs, websites, etc. noting that use of the hashtag# on social media is intended to promote and share the enjoyment of the Patuxent River and identifies unacceptable postings. The Commission voted unanimously to accept the disclaimer language and to participate in the Patuxent River Challenge.

### **Sewage Spill Workgroup update – MDE update**

Jim George provided the update noting that the Health Department Liaison Committee has prepared a draft document and it has been distributed to the County Environmental Health Directors for review and comment. After their comments are received, the document will be shared with the Commission; time frame is probably fall 2017. The proposed document takes a Statewide approach and may result in changes to the legislation.

### **Preservation and Restoration Workgroup update**

- **PCB TMDL workshop**

Jason Dubow provided information on a Toxic Compound TMDL workshop being hosted by the Baltimore Urban Water Partnership on August 3, 2017 at the USGS office on the campus of the University of Maryland Baltimore County. A draft agenda was provided; members of the Commission are invited to attend and should contact Jason to register.

- **Expediting permits for projects that support load reduction targets**

Jason Dubow presented Chris Perry's recommendation that a letter of support be provided to USACE and/or EPA to expedite the review of projects that help meet load reduction targets. Discussion followed that MDE has already implemented separate review processes for restoration versus development project applications. The Commission determined that USCOE should be contacted. Workgroup will meet prior to the next Commission meeting to draft letter.

- **Carroll County Circuit Court ruling – MS4 – stormwater fees**

Vice chair Sigaty noted that a recent Carroll County Circuit Court ruling determined that only jurisdictions with a separate stormwater system could charge the stormwater fee. Implications of the court ruling are still being determined and an update should be available by the next Commission meeting.

- **Patuxent Reservoirs TMDL scoping project status**

Mark Symborski provided the update on the drinking water reservoirs noting that the TMDL advisory committee is working to address the TMDL gap analysis. Resources are currently unavailable to address the WIP. A conference call with MDE is scheduled for Monday to discuss how to move forward. The MS4 component of the watershed is very small. The recommendation will likely be a policy update.

- **Patuxent Research Refuge expansion project**

The update on the Patuxent Research Refuge expansion project was presented by Sandy Spencer. She provided the background on the preservation effort, noting that the landscape conservation design plan will be submitted at the end of August for consideration. Included with the plan is a bird species report that identifies impacts the bird population at build out and determination of the economic and health value of the impacts. The project will be in competition with other USFWS projects across the country for funding. Sandy noted that this is a slow-moving process.

### **Open Floor**

Vice Chair Sigaty opened the floor for discussion and asked the Commission members to suggest agenda items and projects to assist the executive team with planning upcoming meetings.

The following were suggested:

- More presenters to provide information on activities and projects in the watershed
- An update on public properties – could be recent purchases, planned purchases, restoration, enhancement, public access improvements, etc.
- Presentation from DNR's Land Acquisition and Planning group
- Invite citizen groups to present on their activities
- Presentation on the next phase of Bay restoration
- Elliott Campbell, DNR – ecosystem services work